



BASS RIVER TOWNSHIP

(Burlington County)

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Bass River Township Planning Board Meeting *November 17, 2021*

The regular meeting of the Bass River Township Planning board was held on November 17, 2021 in-person and via Zoom phone call and was called to order at 7:00 PM. In accordance with the Sunshine Law, notice of the meeting was posted in The Beacon and the Atlantic City Press.

Planning Board members present were: Mr. Bien, Mr. Chandler, Mr. Neuweiler, Mrs. Ruffo, Mr. Steele, and Ms. DeLois. Mrs. Adams attended via Zoom call.

Mr. Chris Norman attended via Zoom as legal representative. Mr. Joe Gray attended as engineering representative.

The minutes of the regular meeting of October 27, 2021 were available for the board and the public.

Ms. DeLois made a motion to approve the minutes and Mrs. Ruffo seconded the motion. Six were in favor and Mr. Neuweiler abstained. The motion was passed.

Correspondence List was read by Mr. Bien.

New Business:

Mr. Jim McGettigan did not attend the meeting regarding his Waiver for a Site Plan to have a Produce Stand at 19 Teaberry Lane, New Gretna (Block 7 Lot 9.09). He is obtaining a Certificate of Filing from Pinelands Commission, and we will carry this item to the next meeting.

Discussion of cannabis ordinance was moved to after Informal and Old Business discussions.

Informal Business:

1. Discussed moving Planning Board Meetings to the third Wednesday of the month, beginning with December 15, 2021. All present agreed to the change. A resolution will be presented at the January 19, 2022 Reorganization Meeting to make it official.
2. Discussed expiration of three Board Members on December 31, 2021. All three were present and agreed to stay an additional term. Commissioners will reappoint, approve, and swear them in at the January 19, 2022 Reorganization Meeting.

Old Business:

1. A move to vote on Memorializing the Resolution of Land Use Application Form 2021-Waldrop for extension/reapplication of 2007 Minor Site Plan for 101 West Greenbush Road, New Gretna and for redesignation of a building on the property from dwelling to storage shed was made by Bob Neuweiler, and it was seconded by Paul Chandler. A vote was taken. All were in favor, and Resolution 2021-01 was passed.
2. Board discussion for zoning changes – Engineer’s update:
We have submitted clarifications to the Pinelands Commission, as per their request. We are currently awaiting their reply.

Cannabis Discussion:

Discussion of updating the zoning ordinance to include permitted cannabis areas included board members, and Mr. Gray, with Mr. Norman via Zoom call. Mr. Evan Manaresi, a member of the public who has an interest in procuring a state license to farm cannabis at his property in Bass River Township contributed to the discussion, as well as Joseph Dai, of Pantheon, LLC, a company interested in growing cannabis on township property, who called in via Zoom.

Mr. Bien started the discussion by reading existing township ordinances regarding agricultural use. These appear to show support for cannabis as an agricultural product.

Mr. Manaresi provided a copy of Bass River Township – Municipal Code, Supplement 17.24.050 – Agricultural uses. It states, “The right to farm all land is recognized to exist as a natural right and is also ordained to exist as a permitted use everywhere in the township, regardless of zoning designation and regardless of specified uses and prohibited uses set forth elsewhere in this title, subject only to the restrictions and regulations for intensive fowl or livestock farms and subject to township health and sanitary codes.”

Mr. Norman raised concerns about greenhouse operations, and also about Class 2 Processing, such as larger and more environmentally impacting machinery to press into oils, extract byproducts, and subsequent packaging operations. He stated that the Pinelands Commission's position tends to be hesitant on industrial use, but their official position is that each municipality can adopt an ordinance to clearly interpret Class 1 and Class 2 uses. Class 1 can be approved by local board as-is. Class 2 for processing would be a larger and more expensive approval process.

Mr. Manaresi stated that Cultivating and Manufacturing are two separate State licenses. Would a Use Variance be required, since he is not in the Pinelands, and since he would not need a variance of use from existing agricultural ordinances? All he needs to be eligible to receive a State License to cultivate cannabis is a Letter of Support, and a statement that his application meets local zoning standards.

Mr. Norman answered that Mr. Gray can approve at Bass River Township level.

Mr. Neuweiler asked about the ratables that may come back to the township.

Mr. Norman said the state predicts that growing can bring 2%, while growing and shipping can be 1%. This may not sound like much, but in the expected high income business, this is a large influx of income for any townships that have these businesses in them.

Mr. Norman went on to discuss the Pinelands Commission's general position is that they do not want indoor production, due to water usage, water reclamation and water runoff issues.

Mr. Manaresi stated that his property is not in the Pinelands, and that his application will be for growing in soil only, no hydroponics.

He went on to say that the township may be a prime location to allow a cannabis retail facility, because it would draw a lot of customers, since many towns have approved growing, but few have approved dispensaries.

Mr. Dai stated that Pantheon's experience suggests that having a retailer in the growing area makes delivery safer, since it is a shorter distance to travel to point of sale. There could be great value for a township to approve dispensaries, and retailers can buy or lease property and prepare to provide product as soon as licenses are issued.

Mr. Norman stated that licenses for growing and dispensaries are expected to be issued in March 2022, so there is a short window of opportunity to prepare.

7:37 PM A motion to open the meeting to the public was made by Mrs. Ruffo and was seconded by Mr. Neuweiler. All were in favor and the motion was passed.

Mr. Manaresi suggested that retail may be a future concern, but he is currently only invested in growing. Mr. Dai said that manufacturing and dispensaries are not issues for Pantheon LLC at this time, either. They are only interested in cultivating in the township. Mr. Bien stated that the Planning Board will probably be in favor of cannabis growing applications, now that these discussions have clarified many previously unknown aspects. Mr. Gray advised Mr. Manaresi to resubmit his former application and site plan that were not approved. He stated that this discussion had needed to take place prior to making informed decisions.

7:41 PM A motion to close the meeting to the public was made by Mrs. Ruffo, and it was seconded by Mr. Steele. All were in favor and the motion was passed.

7:47 PM Being no other business at this time - A motion was made by Mr. Neuweiler to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by Mrs. Ruffo. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Moyer".

Laura Moyer
Planning Board Secretary